

The University of Huddersfield External Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction and Principles

- 1.1. The University welcomes all constructive feedback on its activities, whether positive or negative, and understands that, from time to time, people or organisations external to the University may feel their expectations have not been met by the University, its staff or students.
- 1.2. The principles underpinning this procedure are that the University will:
 - deal impartially with your complaint within reasonable time frames and in a professional, sensitive and straightforward way;
 - encourage informal early conciliation where possible;
 - deal with your complaint appropriately throughout the complaints process, revealing information to others only to the extent necessary to complete a proper investigation and make a considered response; and
 - ensure that no complaint made in good faith will be used to your disadvantage in the future.

2. Scope of Procedure

- 2.1. Except for those listed in 2.2 below, anyone who is affected by the activities of the University, including those receiving or seeking a service, or those who have been subject to a decision of the University may raise a complaint using this procedure.
- 2.2. The following people may not raise a complaint using this procedure:
 - applicants to courses may not use this procedure where their complaint relates to their application to study at the University. Applicants are directed to the [Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy](#).
 - students may not use this procedure and are directed to the [Student Complaint Procedure](#). Copies can also be obtained from Registry.
 - former students may not use this procedure where their complaint relates to their student experience. In such cases, former students are directed to the Student Complaint Procedure (see above);
 - staff may not use this procedure and are directed to the [Staff Grievance Procedure](#);
 - any complaints in relation to the recruitment or selection of staff are excluded from this procedure; these are covered by the [Recruitment and Selection Procedure](#);

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- users of the Podiatry Clinic services may not use this procedure and are directed to the separate [complaints procedure for the Podiatry Clinic](#).
 - If you work for the University, or if you are a student or an External Member of University Council (or its committees) and you have a genuine concern that there are reasonable grounds for believing that wrongdoing has taken place, or is likely to take place, at the University and that you reasonably believe that it would be in the public interest to disclose it, then you may wish to consider raising your concerns by following the [University's Whistleblowing Policy](#).
- 2.3. If you wish to make a complaint, this should be done as soon as possible. In any event, complaints should be received by the University within 20 working days of the situation arising that is the cause for complaint. Any complaints received after this period will not be considered.
- 2.4. The University reserves the right not to investigate or take any action in relation to a complaint received anonymously or received on behalf of an anonymous complainant through a third party.
- 2.5. Vexatious and malicious complaints (i.e. repeated or persistent complaints which are trivial or untrue, made purposely to abuse this complaints procedure) or those accompanied by abusive or aggressive behaviour will not be dealt with.
- 2.6. If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this procedure, you should seek advice from the University Secretary.

3. Before you raise a complaint

- 3.1. Please consider whether there are more appropriate procedures to make your point such as suggestion schemes or other feedback mechanisms.
- 3.2. Complaints can often be resolved satisfactorily and dealt with quickly on an informal basis. If possible, you should contact the member of staff most directly involved in the situation with a view to resolving any issues on an informal basis as soon as possible and in any event within 20 working days of the situation arising.

4. Making a formal complaint

4.1. Stage 1 – Initiating a formal complaint

- 4.1.1. To initiate a formal complaint you must complete the complaint form which can be found at the end of this document at appendix 1.
- 4.1.2. Formal complaints must be received within 20 working days of the situation arising that is the cause for complaint. If you have sought to resolve your complaint informally within 20 working days of the situation arising and you have not been able to reach a mutually

acceptable outcome within that period, then the time limit for making a formal complaint will be extended by a further 10 working days.

- 4.1.3. Completed forms should be passed to the appropriate Dean of School, Director or Head of Service who will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days. S/he will then undertake a full investigation. If you are unsure about the identity of the person to whom you should submit the form, you can send it to: The University Secretary, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield HD1 3DH, who will forward it to the appropriate person.
- 4.1.4. A full and considered response will usually be made within 20 working days of receipt of your complaint. If the investigation cannot be completed in that time for good reason (such as staff unavailability due to holidays) or the matter is complex, you will be advised of a revised timescale.
- 4.1.5. If the complaint relates to the conduct of a member of staff or a student, this will be investigated under the staff or student disciplinary procedure, as appropriate.
- 4.1.6. Please note that due to the University's obligations under data protection legislation the University is required to maintain confidentiality in relation to staff and student disciplinary matters. This means that where the investigation of your complaint is conducted under any disciplinary procedure you will only be informed that your complaint has been investigated in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedure and that appropriate action has been taken in accordance with that procedure. This will signal the conclusion of the matter. No Stage 2 (Final Review) process is available for complaints relating to staff or student disciplinary matters.

4.2. Stage 2 – Final Review

- 4.2.1. If you are dissatisfied with the decision from Stage 1 of your formal complaint, you may refer the matter to the appropriate member of the University's Senior Management Team using the Final Review Request Form, which can be found at the end of this document at appendix 2. The letter you receive at the end of Stage 1 will tell you who this is but it will usually be one of the following:
 - Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning): complaints relating to the provision of teaching, learning or student services.
 - Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise): complaints about research or about University research partners both home and abroad.

- Pro-Vice Chancellor (International): complaints about international collaboration (other than research collaboration) and international student recruitment, save where a complaint relates to an international student's application to study, which should be brought under the Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy.
 - University Secretary: complaints relating to any other service supplied by the University or complaints about University Council members or otherwise relating to the business of the University Council or its committees,
 - Deputy Vice Chancellor: complaints relating to the conduct of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) or the University Secretary. Any such complaint will be considered and investigated under the University's staff disciplinary procedure, where appropriate to do so.
 - Vice-Chancellor: complaints relating to the conduct of the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
- 4.2.2. To initiate a final review you must complete the Final Review Request Form and send it to the appropriate person above within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying you of the outcome to your formal Stage 1 complaint.
- 4.2.3. The final review will be completed within 20 working days of receipt of your Final Review Request Form and the outcome will be reported to you in writing. If the review cannot be completed in time for good reason (such as staff unavailability due to holidays) or the matter is complex, you will be advised of a revised timescale.
- 4.2.4. The decision made at the end of the final review stage is final and there will be no further avenue of review in the University. If there is an external review body to whom the matter can be referred, (such as the Information Commissioner's Office) we will advise you of this when we report the outcome of the final review.

APPENDIX 1 - EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS FORM

This form is to be completed under Stage 1 of the procedure for formal complaints by persons external to the University.

Please complete in block capitals or type

Personal Details

Title: Name:.....

Address for correspondence in connection with the complaint:

.....
.....
.....

Postcode:..... Telephone/Mobile number:.....

Outline of complaint, including dates of actions (please use additional sheets if necessary):

Please explain here what steps you have taken, together with dates, to resolve your complaint informally. If no such steps have been taken please explain why this was not considered appropriate:

Please explain why you are not satisfied with the response you have received from your informal complaint:

Please indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting:

As part of the investigation of your complaint any members of staff or students mentioned may be made aware of the complaint, as will the Dean/Head of the Academic or Service Department involved.

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this form is true, accurate and complete, and that I would be willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

Signed:..... Date:.....

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Complaints relating to Schools: Dean of the School to which the complaint relates.

Complaints relating to Services: Director or Head of Service to which the complaint relates.

If you are unsure to whom the form should be returned, please send it to the University Secretary who will ensure it reaches the appropriate recipient.

The University of Huddersfield
Queensgate
Huddersfield
HD1 3DH

This form is available in alternative formats, including large font, Braille and an electronic version. If you would like an alternative format of this form, please contact the University Secretary on 01484 473000 or at The University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, HD1 3DH.

APPENDIX 2 – FINAL REVIEW REQUEST FORM

This form is to be completed under Stage 2 of the procedure for a request for a final review of a complaint made under the External Complaints Procedure.

Please enclose with this form a copy of your original complaint and the formal response that you have received under Stage 1 of the External Complaints Procedure.

Please complete in block capitals or type

Personal Details

Title: Name:.....

Address for correspondence in connection with the complaint:

.....
.....
.....

Postcode:..... Telephone/Mobile number:.....

Please explain who has previously dealt with your complaint and why you are dissatisfied with the outcome (please use additional sheets if necessary):

Please indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting:

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this form is true, accurate and complete, and that I would be willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

Signed:..... Date:.....

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AT THE ADDRESS BELOW, ENCLOSING COPIES OF YOUR ORIGINAL COMPLAINT AND THE OUTCOME THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED TO STAGE 1:

- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning): complaints relating to the provision of teaching learning or student services.
- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise): complaints about research or about University research partners both home and abroad.
- Pro-Vice Chancellor (International): complaints about international collaboration (other than research collaboration) and international student recruitment, save where a complaint relates to an international student's application to study, which should be brought under the Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy.
- University Secretary: complaints relating to any other service supplied by the University or complaints about University Council members or otherwise relating to the business of the University Council or its committees,
- Deputy Vice Chancellor: complaints relating to the conduct of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) or the University Secretary. Any such complaint will be considered and investigated under the University's staff disciplinary procedure, where appropriate to do so.
- Vice-Chancellor: complaints relating to the conduct of the Deputy Vice Chancellor.

If you are unsure to whom the form should be returned, please send it to the University Secretary who will ensure it reaches the appropriate recipient.

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